LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 975
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Cleopatra and Her Loves

Clement Wood

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CONTENTS

		Page
I.	The Loung Lover	5
II.	Julius Caesar	12
III.	The Queen in Rome	21
IV.	Mark Antony	30
V.	The Love Renewed	42
VI.	After Actium	52

CLEOPATRA AND HER LOVES

CHAPTER I

THE YOUNG LOVER

Cleopatra was a pure Greek by blood, of a family which accidents of conquest had placed over Egypt. The first of the Ptolemies, or ruling house of which Cleopatra was the last, was Ptolemy, son of Lagos, a Macedonian general of Alexander the Great. At the death of the world-conqueror, Ptolemy seized Egypt; and he and his descendants continued to rule the Nile Empire for two and a half centuries. Alexandria, where the Ptolemies ruled, was a Greek colony placed on the seacoast of Egypt, built with Greek buildings, living a Grecian life, and with Greek as its court language. Such pictures as we have of Cleopatra, even when representing the Egyptian goddess Isis, show her clad in the Greek manner.

The Ptolemies were a family of royal murderers. The fourth Ptolemy murdered his father, Ptolemy III, and planned the murders of his brother, his uncle, his mother, and his wife. Ptolemy V murdered all who offended him; the eighth of the name murdered his young nephew, the rightful heir to the throne; married the boy's mother, Cleopatra II, and killed his own child by her. He then married his niece, Cleopatra III; and, upon his death, the younger wife murdered the older of the same name. The young queen's son, Ptolemy

XI, was marked for murder by his mother; when the plot failed, the son murdered his own mother. Ptolemy XII married and then murdered his stepmother, and was himself murdered soon after. The thirteenth of the name, father of the great Cleopatra, murdered his daughter Berenice, and several other persons. Into this pleasant family circle Cleopatra was born.

The women of the family were even more violent than the men. The men were bad enough, including Ptolemy IX, nicknamed "The Bloated" by the court wits; Ptolemy X, of the great purplish nose; Ptolemy XI, so bloated by gluttony and vice that he seldom walked without crutches. The father of Cleopatra, nicknamed Auletes or "The Piper," hated temperance so much that he threatened the philosopher Demetrius with death, for not being intoxicated at a royal feast; and, to save his life, the unfortunate philosopher the next day had to drink himself silly. The Piper was a degenerate little kingling, who lurched across Egypt's political stage in a condition of almost continuous drunkenness. His predecessor had willed Egypt to the Roman Republic; The Piper spent much of his life and his fortune bribing the great Roman politicians to let him continue to play at kinging Egypt. While away on this mission at Rome, his daughter Berenice seized the throne, and ruled as Berenice IV. This was in 58 B. C.; the young Cleopatra was now eleven years old.

The young princess already promised what the great queen would be. From all accounts she was a brunette, though not of the Egyptian

type. Her features were small and delicate: the mouth exquisitely formed, the eyes large and well placed, the eyebrows pencilled. Her charm and personal magnetism were as great as that of any living woman or man. Her height was not great; but her bearing was queenly. Most of all, her voice was an irresistible weapon. As Dion Cassius tells us,

> Her charm of speech was such that she won all who listened.

Greek she knew perfectly, and she conversed with facility in Latin, Ethiopian, Hebrew, Arabian, Syrian, Median and many other tongues. She was keenly interested in statecraft and philosophy, and all in all was already by way of becoming one of the world's great women. Nor was she a slave to her lusts. We recognize Cleopatra as a lover moderate for her time, who was a faithful wife-mistress to Caesar and Antony, and a devoted mother to her four children.

We see her first love in the lovely *Aphrodite* of Pierre Louys—a picture not strictly historical, but in the spirit of the time. Berenice, according to the story, was racked by her love for a Greek named Demetrios. Cleopatra the Princess forced her way into the queen's antechamber, saying to the sentinel who sought to bar her way:

"Thou, if thou touchest me, I will cry rape and I will have thee quartered."

The soldier cowered away from her threat, and let her pass. Gently she wakened the sleeping queen: "Why is not thy lover with thee?"

The queen answers at last that, though one may reign over all of the world that is not Rome's, and even over the gods, man cannot reign over love: for love means self sacrifice.

"Thou dost not know how to love," replied the child Cleopatra.

At this the queen called her "Presumptuous little virgin!" This drew from Cleopatra the confession that she, too, had a lover. From half of her present age, the precocious princess says, she has known how she would hold a lover. At the queen's insistence, she agrees to lead Berenice to the place where she keeps her lover. Down into the dark womb of the palace the girl flitted ahead of the queen, to a great thick underground door banded with iron. This Cleopatra unlocked; whereupon a man, gigantic in the shadow, rose to his full height at the back of the prison.

Erect upon the threshhold of the chamber, Cleopatra said to the man standing in the shadow: "Come kiss my feet, son of a dog."

And when he had done so, she kissed his lips.

This was not her only early love, as Shakespeare implies in *Antony and Cleopatra*, when he has the great warrior say to the Nile queen,

I found you as a morsel cold upon
Dead Caesar's trencher; nay, you were a fragment
Of Cneius Pompey's; besides what hotter hours,
Unregister'd in vulgar fame, you have
Luxuriously pick'd out.

Meanwhile, Ptolemy Auletes, The Piper, on his mission at Rome, had bribed and murdered successfully, and returned to Egypt with Roman troops. The commander of the Roman

cavalry was Mark Antony, a striking young Hercules whose future lay still before him. The Piper had his daughter, Berenice, and her husband, put to death, and reascended drunkenly his throne. The young princess, Cleopatra, now fourteen, is said to have attracted the Roman cavalry leader by her young beauty and charm. At fourteen, a Mediterranean girl is already a woman: and while the meeting was not immediately significant, it must have set both of them to dreaming.

Four years later, the rioting Alexandrians drove out the Romans; and only the great Parthian disaster prevented Rome from immediately annexing the kingdom of the Nile. The Piper did not live to enjoy this respite: he died, leaving behind him his four children by a second marriage, Cleopatra, two young Ptolemies, and the Princess Arsinoe. The Piper's will left the kingdom jointly to Cleopatra, now eighteen, and her next brother, now ten or eleven; and, in accordance with the Ptolemaic custom, Cleopatra was married to her brother, who took the title of Ptolemy XIV. The guardians of the young king, the eunuch Potheinos, the royal tutor Theodotos, and the soldier Achillas, took most of the control away from the young queen.

Two years later, Pompey sent his son, Cneius Pompeius, to Egypt, to secure ships and men for his civil warfare against Julius Caesar: and the story is that the young queen and the Roman youth became intimates, and probably lovers, as Shakespeare's lines indicate. The Alexandrian politicians may well have contemplated a union of their queen with the son

of this ruler of the Roman World. And then Pompey's sun suddenly fell: and Cleopatra's passed into a dark eclipse. There was a quarrel between the young queen and her brother, young Ptolemy, backed by Potheinos, Theodotos, and Achillas, set himself up as sole sovereign of Egypt, and Cleopatra was obliged to flee for her life to Syria. Here she raised an expeditionary force to march back on Egypt, and seek to restore her to the throne. It was the sword of Achillas which aided in killing Pompey, on his flight to Egypt; and he and his fellow conspirators waited in Alexandria to turn the same blades upon the young queen.

Julius Caesar, in hot pursuit, arrived at Alexandria, and the royal tutor, the rhetorician Theodotos, presented to the great conqueror the head of Pompey. Caesar turned in sorrow and disgust from the gruesome relic, and told Theodotos to take his face and his person forever away from Roman eyes. Years afterwards, the man was apprehended by Marcus Brutus, and was ignominiously crucified for his offense to Pompey. To the consternation of the other Egyptian conspirators, Caesar announced that he would stay for the present in Alexandria, and took up his abode in the royal palace. At once he sent orders to young Ptolemy and Cleopatra to cease their warfare, and present their claims to the Roman to be decided. Ptolemy, Potheinos, and later Achillas did so: but Cleopatra, on the outskirts of the city, could not enter Alexandria without running the strong risk of meeting the same steel that had stabbed Pompey.

We can picture the disconsolate little queen, cast out by her country, ordered to appear in the palace where her enemies thronged, with no hope but the remote chance that the great Roman world conquerer would grant her justice. Was there any way that she could come into her own again?

CHAPTER II

JULIUS CAESAR

Most women would have given up in despair; but not Cleopatra. She determined to slip into the palace, since she could not enter it as a queen. She sailed from the fortress of Pelusium toward Alexandria in one of her large ships, and then transferred at nightfall into a small boat, accompanied only by one friend, the gigantic Apollodorus the Sicilian. She did not imagine that a Roman, a foreigner, could actually be in control of the royal Egyptian palace: she foresaw every possibility that she would fall into the hand of her brother's murderous party. Accordingly, she had Apollodorus roll her up in the blankets and rugs in the small boat, and tie her strongly with a cord: then, heaving the precious bundle upon his back, make his way as a burden-bearer into the presence of great Caesar. The audacious exploit was commenced; the gigantic Sicilian carried the queen as if she had been pots and pans, or a load of peacock's feathers, through the guards, saying that it was a bundle for Caesar's self.

And so he made his way in safety to Caesar's apartment. With a significant smile Apollodorus, after all in audience had been sent out, unwrapped the bundle. Out tumbled the dishéveled, touzled little queen; and I am sure that she laughed, or perhaps even giggled, at

the amazed look on the face of the Roman Mars. She at once explained her exploit to the startled man: and Caesar, who delighted in deeds of daring as amply as he did in feminine beauty, was utterly captivated by the queen's bold wit. Reading the admiration in his eyes, the queen had already planned a wider conquest than her own Egypt. All night long they were closeted together. She told him her adventures since she had been driven from her kingdom; and he in turn told her some of his own hairbreadth 'scapes on land and sea. And this cannot have been all they talked of: for, if Cleopatra was precocious in love, so was Caesar.

At this time the world-conqueror had already celebrated his fifty-fourth birthday, and had earned the nickname of the "husband of all women." Yet he still retained something of his youth: graceful, light-built, obviously aristocratic. His thin, clean-shaven face, his keen, dark eyes, his clear-cut features, his hard, firm, whimsical mouth, bespoke him an adventurous gentleman who had relished every moment of his life. He was scrupulously clean, almost to the point of foppishness. So notorious was his seductiveness, that on his return from the successful Gallic wars his soldiers composed and sang a marching song, "Beware, citizens, hide your women, lest our commander treat them as he treated all the women of Gaul." He had had an affair with the mother of Marcus Brutus, and probably regarded that stupid young patriot as his own son; he had passed through a period of pas-

sionate effeminacy. During this time, after he stayed with his friend Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia, he was jestingly called Queen Bithynia; and later a Roman wit named Octavius saluted Pompey and Caesar as King and Queen of Rome. His intrigues with the wives of his friends had been as frequent as they were notorious. Not even political considerations restrained his amorousness, as when he conducted an affair with Mucia, wife of Pompey, at a time when it was essential for him to retain the man's friendship. As Oman writes,

> He was the inevitable co-respondent in every fashionable divorce; and when we look at the list of the ladies whose names are linked with his, we can only wonder at the state of society in Rome which permitted him to survive unscathed to middle age. The marvel is that he did not end in some dark corner, with a dagger between his ribs, long before he attained the age of thirty.

He was shrewd in his love-making, at one time conducting affairs simultaneously with the wives of Pompey, Crassus, and Gabinius, all leaders of his political party. He was unscrupulous and reckless in money matters, and had had numerous occasions when bankruptcy stared him in the face; and he was at all times abnormal in his desire for unlimited power. It was he who said that he had rather be first in a mean village, than second in Rome; it was he who burst into tears on reading the life of Alexander the Great, who had conquered the world at an age when he, Caesar, had done nothing. He had had four wives already, the heiress Cossutia, whom he divorced;

Cornelia, whom he loved till her death; Pompeia, whom he divorced; and Calpurnia. To Pompey he soon proposed that he divorce Calpurnia, and marry Pompey's daughter, who must be divorced from her present husband for this purpose; and that Pompey should marry Octavia, Caesar's niece, who was married at the time and would also have to be divorced. Pompey rejected this complicated legalized adultery; but Caesar would have gladly gone through with it, to strengthen his political prestige.

Thus we find that Caesar, the experienced lover, was more than a match for the young Egyptian queen, who was now barely twenty-one, said to be derived from the gods, and fabulously wealthy. His all night interview with Cleopatra was concerned with more than politics and statescraft, of that we may be sure. It completely changed the aspect of things Egyptian. It sealed the doom of luckless hysterical little Ptolemy XIV. The daredevil girl completely won the heart of the seasoned campaigner, who wanted her both as an object of love, and as the convenient way to acquire control over Egypt, the granary of the world, the market of the Mediterranean, the keystone of Eastern politics, the gateway to the unconquered Orient.

As the sun rose, after the momentous night, Caesar sent for King Ptolemy. The little king gasped in chagrin when he found the Roman closeted with his banished sister. Caesar treated the youth with sternness: how had he dared go against the expressed commands of

his father? At this the young king lost his head completely, and dashed from the room, crying out to his attendants that everything was lost. An uproar started, that reached the crowd outside, and might have provoked civil war. But Caesar, always quick to act, hurried out and addressed the crowd, promising to arrange matters to their satisfaction. He called a meeting at which both queen and king attended, solemnly read out the will of the dead little drunken Piper, and affected some sort of reconciliation between brother and sister.

Ptolemy was right in thinking that his cause with Caesar was ruined. For Caesar held that the boy had forfeited all claim to his esteem, by attempting to set aside the will of Auletes. Cleopatra was doubly desirable, for her own self and as the key to control of Egypt and the Orient. Caesar demanded the money that the Piper had borrowed from the Romans; whereupon Portheinos, to secure public sympathy, melted down the king's golden table service, and spread abroad the report that the poor little king was forced to eat out of wooden vessel, like any Nile dredger. Hostilities began to erupt: and Caesar, as usual, acted first. He burnt the king's fleet, seized the Pharos Lighthouse which commanded the harbor, and fortified the palace.

Meanwhile, Caesar and Cleopatra were plunged into the midst of their romantic love. To her, the Roman was the first great full-hearted passion of her life, with all of its sweet period of discovery; to him, there was the passionate enjoyment of a man past his

prime in the devotion of a charming young girl. He was one of the world's ideal lovers, with a technique sharpened by constant practice; and Cleopatra asked for nothing further. Caesar, at the time, was in holiday mood; news from Rome was all favorable, and he laid aside statecraft for the more intimate rapture of love.

It was too much to hope that this uninterrupted pleasance might last forever. The two young Ptolemies were imprisoned in the castle held by the Roman; but by a plot the Princess Arsinoe was smuggled out, and proclaimed as queen. Portheinos, moreover, concocted a plot calling for his escape with the young king. Caesar learned of this in time, and had the meddlesome eunuch beheaded. Then the enemy poisoned Caesar's water supply; while he was attempting to cut his way out to an unpolluted supply, the sinking of trial shafts within the beseiged area located an unguessed and ample store of water. And then his Thirty-seventh Legion arrived from Asia Minor, and Caesar sailed triumphantly out and joined with them.

On his return, he defeated the Egyptian ships that had gathered by the Lighthouse, and attacked the city itself. Here he suffered a reverse; he and his men had to escape by ship, and the one in which Caesar had taken refuge, overloaded by soldiers, capsized, presenting to the world the dramatic picture of its ruler swimming for his life through the quiet waters of the harbor, holding aloft in one hand a bundle of important papers, dragging his scarlet military cloak in his teeth, and constantly

ducking his bald head to avoid the missles hurled at him by the victorious Egyptians. He was picked up by a ship, minus his cloak, and returned, very cold and dripping wet.

The efforts of Princess Arsinoe to secure the throne had failed so far; and Caesar determined to hand the young Ptolemy over to the Egyptian forces, as a shrewd way of jeopardizing his further chances. Ptolemy, seeing this, burst into tears, and vainly begged to be allowed to remain in the Palace. The rescue forces appeared from the East; Caesar outmaneuvered the Egyptian fleet, and attacked their camp in person; Ptolemy sought to flee in a boat moored in the Nile; suddenly the boat was capsized by the number of fugitives. He was never seen alive again. Caesar rode into Alexandria, undisputed conqueror at last, with the Princess Arsinoe his captive; and in this victorious role he returned to the palace and to the passionate arms of Cleopatra.

The younger brother was raised to the throne with Cleopatra as Ptolemy XV; for he was very young, and neither intelligent nor audacious. Caesar had now been in Alexandria six months, part of the time fighting, and most of the time engaged in the pleasant task of making love to Cleopatra; and affairs in Rome called him homeward. But there was one impelling reason for him to stay: the young queen expected soon to be a mother. Caesar had no son; and he must have seen in this byblown offspring of himself and the great queen a possible heir to his own great fortunes and influence. He, no less than Cleopatra, looked forward to seeing

this possible son legitimatized. He willingly acceded to her requests, and had himself recognized by the Egyptians as the divine consort of the queen, an impersonation of the god Jupiter-Amon upon earth. Some form of marriage had taken place between them; or, at least, the bulk of the Egyptian people recognized their union as legal. It is easy to despair of man's progress; but, at least, recent Germans did not regard the Kaiser as a reincarnation on earth of Odin; nor do the moujiks see Lenin as Jehovah reincarnated, however much some in other lands may regard him as animated by Beelzebub's fire. The Egyptians saw Caesar as a living god, and their queen as a living goddess: and the world's eyes are opening. Cleopatra had bas-reliefs made of her marriage to the god Amon, whose face looks suspiciously like that of the great Julius; and there is preserved an epitaph dated "twenty years after the union of Cleopatra with Amon."

Caesar no doubt recalled that Alexander had called himself a son of Amon, and a god; and the Roman traced his descent back to the goddess Venus, by a flattering family tree. It was pleasant to be regarded as a god; and with this came the feeling that he should be, not chief citizen in a republic, but a king. He was in fact, if not in name, King of Egypt. To the Egyptians, the recollection that he had a wife living in Rome was no hindrance: he was a god, and, besides, the Roman woman had borne him no son. And Cleopatra loved Caesar; and knew that the son she might soon present him might conceivably become the heir of the entire world.

So her task was a double one: to retain Caesar's love, and to encourage his ideas toward kingship. The final catastrophe at Rome had its roots in the months in which Caesar lived with this absolute queen of Egypt, whose nod was law.

It is clear, too, that what kept Caesar in Egypt now was no longer the sensuous allurements of the Nile queen. A woman on the eve of motherhood holds by other chains. Caesar was held by the love of a man for his mate: as well as by his ambition, in the hope that the fruit of the sweet romance would be the heir of all the world.

After a brief trip up the Nile, the child was born, and proved to be a boy. The Egyptians at once accepted him as the legitimate child of the union of their queen with the god Amon, who had appeared in the form of the Roman. He was named Caesar, or more familiarly Caesarion, a Greek diminutive of the word; officially, of course, he was called Ptolemy, and ultimately was the sixteenth and last of that name. Egyptian inscriptions frequently referred to him as "Ptolemy called Caesar."

And now, with this accomplished, Caesar felt he could remain no longer in Egypt. There were Mediterranean campaigns still to be fought; there was Parthia to be subdued, and India to be entered and conquered. Then, with one bold stroke, he could elevate the Queen of Egypt to the queenship of the world, with himself as its king. His head throbbing with these golden visions, he set sail for Rome.

CHAPTER III

THE QUEEN IN ROME

The first point Caesar touched land was at Antioch. Here he learned that a lieutenant had been defeated by Pontian rebels. On a forced ride with only a thousand cavalry Caesar arrived at the point of conflict, and defeated the rebels with great slaughter. His godlike message, "I came, I saw, I conquered," from this victory, shows how his mind was altering. After a brief stay in Rome, he pursued the Pompeian remnants to northern Africa, where they were exterminated. Arriving again in Rome on July 25, B. C. 46, the victor sent word to Cleopatra to come with their baby to Rome.

Caesar must have had mingled feelings in dispatching this message; for he had not been faithful to the great queen, in the brief period in which he had been separated from her. During his residence in North Africa, in the preceding winter or early spring, he had been much attracted by Eunoe, the wife of Bogud, King of Mauretania; and he had consoled himself for the temporary loss of Cleopatra by making this new sovereign his mistress. With him, accomplished philanderer that he was, the first piquancy of discovery was over: he had explored the dark delta of the Nile, and was possessor of its charms. Yet the great lover,

for all that he may stoop to sample stray wares, will often hold his heart to some extent bound to some one love, worthier than the rest: and this role Cleopatra henceforth filled in the life of the Roman.

There is a dispute as to the exact date of her arrival in Rome; the probability is that she came over to Italy with the Egyptian prisoners, Princess Arsinoe and the rest, who were to be displayed in Caesar's triumph. She would not have minded witnessing the triumph; to her it represented, not so much a Roman warfare against Egypt, as Roman assistance in her own warfare against her offending brother. Her very presence in Rome would be evidence that her country, in the warfare, had suffered no defeat. Caesar had just been made Dictator for the third time: and he desired the lovely Egyptian to witness his immense power, verging toward the monarchial. He had much to do in the East before he could yet introduce the dark queen to Rome as his imperial consort: but he felt himself so far above criticism, that he believed he could safely introduce his royal mistress at home.

And so the Nile minx, with the infant Caesarion, arrived at the capital on the Tiber. It must have been a sensation to Rome, accustomed as it was to the display of the world's strange creatures, to see the cartloads of baggage, the immense consort of agitated eunuchs and slaves. She brought along her little brother, Ptolemy XV, for safety's sake; but more thrilling than he, in Roman eyes, was the one-year-old heir of the Caesars and the Ptole-

mies, surrounded by guards and fussing nurses. Cleopatra and her suite were housed in Caesar's trans-Tiberian gardens; and presumably Calpurnia was left to head the city establishment. The unfortunate fact that most of us know Caesar through the vestibule of Shakespeare's play, where the wife Calpurnia alone is mentioned, or through academic histories that leave out both women, has blinded most of us to the fact that, for his last two years in Rome, not the wife Calpurnia, but the mistress Cleopatra, was Caesar's wife in fact.

Caesar was happy to have his witty, audacious, and queenly mistress lodged in his villa, where he could visit her at any hour of the day or night; he was as much interested in the little son, now fourteen months old. The boy was already showing a marked facial resemblance to the great conqueror, a resemblance that increased as he grew older; and the child's presence constituted a bond of much permanence between the great lovers. Caesar himself was beginning to show the effects of premature age and ill health; this made him less the ardent lover than the lovable friend and husband. They were bound to one another by the rich memories of past passion, by kindred ambitions, and by their joint parenthood.

Of course there was scandal in the queen's presence in Rome: which bothered the aging autocrat not a bit. The Romans as a rule did not like her; but they paid court to her, as the real power in Caesar's counsels. What a triumph it was that the young queen beheld!

The first day was devoted to the Gallic wars: a ride through the streets by day, a torchlight ascent to the capital, with forty elephants holding torchbearers to light his chariot—a parade impressive enough. To cap it, the brave Gallic chief Vercingetorix, who had been held a prisoner for six years, was callously put to death. Upon the second day, the Egyptian conquest was celebrated, with Princess Arsinoe led through the streets in chains, and her honorary male nurse Ganymedes executed at the end of the day's marchings. There was a statue of old Nilus, and a reproduction of the Pharos, one of the world's seven wonders; there were animals strange to Rome, giraffes or cameleopards and wilder beasts, to be gazed at by the wondering populace. On the third day, it was the conquest of Pontus, with the arrogant message "I came, I saw, I conquered" before the conqueror. On the last day, the victories in North Africa were extolled—presumably Roman triumph over King Juba of Numidia, but in fact a Roman victory over fellow Romans, which caused some offense. Caesar young would not have erred thus in taste and tact: but the man grew old. And none, along the long line, applauded as much as the Nile queen and her chubby-handed infant.

Yet even Cleopatra could see that Caesar was far from normal. Akhnaton, the great Egyptian reformer, suffered from epilepsy; Mohammed, to put it bluntly, had fits; and Julius Caesar was increasingly subject to the same seizures. To Cleopatra, these may have indicated his nearness to the godhead; a modern physician

would have such a subject committed for observation. Toward the end of September, in the same year, Caesar showed his warping judgment by opening a new temple to Venus Genetrix, his divine ancestress; and in the sanctuary he placed a statue of Cleopatra. The significance of this cannot be overestimated: Caesar was telling the Romans, in the enduring speech of chiselled stone, that the queen dwelling among them was in reality Venus come to earth again. Whether this be called poetry, symbolism, or epilepsy, it cannot have been reassuring to the hard-headed Romans.

The opening of the new temple was accompanied by amazing festivities, at which the people seemed to go mad with enthusiasm. There were great gladiatorial shows, and a miniature sea fight upon an artificial lake: and the populace itself seemed quite complacent to accept the Egyptian queen as a goddess, whether Isis or Venus or what not. Many of the Dictator's acts offended powerful people in Rome; and from this an unrest breathed throughout the people. It was necessary for Caesar to play constantly to the galleries; and, luckily, he was a genius in self-advertisement, as was Theodore Roosevelt much later. Succeeding in this conquest of the populace at home, the Dictator's mind was full of dreams of renewing the Parthian wars, and undoubtedly going beyond to the legended wealth of India, when events in Spain brought him back to reality. Pompey's sons assembled the last remnant of the Pompeian force: and here Caesar went, and at the battle of Munda he

entirely routed the enemy. This meant another triumph, marked by a reconciliation with Antony, who had fallen away for a brief time; and yet again this triumph, over fellow-Romans, provoked further criticism.

The people of Rome, and many of the leaders, began now to discuss openly the elevation of Caesar to the throne. His own wishes leaned unquestionably in this direction; and Cleopatra's constant whispered insistence was largely instrumental in bringing him to this state of mind. Her every attitude of mind differed from the republican attitude of the Romans: it was not difficult for Caesar to share the opinion of his queen-consort, especially when conditions in Rome had been tending for years toward a monarchy. From the return to Spain until his assassination, Caesar pressed openly toward the monarchy. He soon had himself given the hereditary title of Imperator. This meant merely "Commander in Chief": but it was made hereditary, and Caesar had no heir but Cleopatra's son Caesarion. It must be repeated that the Romans did not regard Cleopatra as an Egyptian, or as a barbarian; but as what she was, a royal Greek lady whose Hellenic capital was the rival of the Eternal City in wealth, culture, and magnificence. At about this time, Ptolemy XV disappears from the records mysteriously: and Caesarion became the uncrowned king of Egypt.

Caesar pushed on toward the monarchy. He caused a statue of himself to be erected in the Capitol as the eighth royal figure there, the

previous seven being the seven legendary kings of Rome. He began to wear the embroidered dress of the old kings; his head on Roman coins appeared as a monarch's; the Senate provided him two thrones of gold; he carried an ivory scepter, and wore a laurel-wreath of gold above his brows. He was given a consecrated chariot and a royal body-guard. He had his image carried among the statues of the immortal gods; a temple dedicated to Jupiter Julius was decreed, and his statue was set up in the temple of Quirinus, inscribed "To the Immortal God." A college of priests was established in his honor. Before the next February 15th he was made Dictator for life. He insulted tribunes and senators for not paying him royal homage, and acted like an autocratic god or a spoiled child. Cleopatra's attitude reflected that of the Dictator, just as he had received part of his attitude from her.

On February 15th, the ancient feast of the Lupercalia was celebrated in Rome. Caesar presided over the feast, and Antony was one of the two priests who carried it out. In the boisterous horse-play of the occasion, Antony, perhaps instigated by Cleopatra, perhaps by her and the Dictator, stepped forward and offered Caesar a royal diadem, representing the crown of Rome. A few Caesarians posted here and there raised a feeble cheer; but the crowd were silent, and then began to boo gently. Half-heartedly, at this showing, Caesar pushed the crown aside. A second and a third time the popular disapproval made him reject it: and he proceeded with his plans for the Par-

thian expedition,, meanwhile ordering Cleopatra, for her safety's sake, to return to Alexandria, until he came back victor, and could seat her upon the throne of the world. She cannot have looked happily at the prospect: for she had expected, long before now, to be placed upon the Roman throne.

Then came the unexpected. Cassius, his dupe Brutus, and other conspirators, planned to kill Caesar. The Dictator was about to absent himself from the Senate House on this day, due to the ill omens and his legal wife Calpurnia's fears, when one of the conspirators, Decimus Brutus, told Caesar that the Senators had decided to name Caesar that day as king of all Rome outside Italy. Thrilled with this news, Caesar went forth to his death. The eloquence of Antony turned the populace against the conspirators, who had to fly the capitol.

But Cleopatra was inconsolable. She had given the best years of her young womanhood to achieving her goal, the throne of the world: and here at one stroke she had lost this objective, as well as her dearest friend and her former lover. She undoubtedly consulted with Antony, and his advice was that she remain in Rome. For Antony realized that, with Octavian, Caesar's nephew, in Rome, his own power would be slight; while, if he could get Caesarion's claims recognized by the Senate, and himself appointed as regent, he might control for years to come. Antony tried in vain to get the Senate to recognize the infant's claim; and, at the news of Octavian's approach, and the threat of civil war, it was decided

that Cleopatra should return to Egypt with her son, to await the outcome of events. And so she left.

Her world was wrecked again, as it had been in her girlhood: but the mood of dejection did not become this queen among women. Even on her gloomy passage back to her Nile home, Cleopatra began to scheme how she could secure for her tiny son the power she longed to wield. Caesar was dead; but his power was living in the child; and, with Antony, the handsome, the pliable, as her champion, what might not come to pass? It was with such despairing optimism that her fleet sailed again to the great city at Nile mouth.

CHAPTER IV

MARK ANTONY

Something should be said for the divine audacity of Cleopatra through all of this, and the strange standards of conduct that ruled the world then. Rome was a republic then, as our country is; Cleopatra was queen of the second greatest country in the world, which had its conventional ethics that concerned kings and queens as clearly as it concerned draymen and crabwomen. Suppose any one of our presidents, on a tour, peaceful or otherwise, to some great foreign kingdom, should accept its queen as his mistress, and bring her to Washington with her child by him—to a Washington where the president already had a wife living: it is clear that such conduct would not receive the unanimous approval of all our bishops, prohibitionists, Rotarians, Epworth Leaguers, and others careful to keep up the moral tone of their neighbors. So great was Caesar's power, so great was Cleopatra's audacity, that these royal lovers almost consummated their joint amorous and political plans.

They were amorous plans, but they were political as well. Cleopatra was a great lover, when she loved without a political objective. It was not quite true of her that

> She gave her body like a queen.
> To any man who came.

She was a bit more selective: but time and again she gave her body for love's sake, pas-

sionately and completely, especially in her early days, and after Caesar's death and before Antony had taken his chief's place. It was not this type of love that made her the unique intrigant that she is: it was where she played her body carefully as a pawn or a larger piece, in her game of kingdoms.

She went to Caesar to gain a political end: and, while she accepted him as a lover, completely and joyfully, there was never a moment of their contact when she did not recall what she wished to gain by the connection. She was entitled to the throne, or half the throne of Egypt; she determined to use Caesar to regain her half throne, and, at last, to get the entire sovereignty. Her dreams widened: she saw a further gift that she could give him of her body, a son, who might—nay, who would inherit the whole world as his sovereignty: and with this greater stake she continued her game. She came to Rome, to Calpurnia's territory, to achieve this for herself and her son: and lost it merely because Caesar grew old enough to listen without suspicion to the outrageous flattery of Decimus Brutus, on the morning of one fateful Ides of March.

Her game was not played yet. She had given her body, her honor, her pain, and her son to Caesar: there was only one man in the world who might stand forth as her and the son's champion, and make the incredible dream a mighty reality. That man was Antony: and from the moment that she fled from the red threat of civil war in Rome, her waking hours were spent in devising methods of uniting her

lot with his. Her one objective was, not love, but the security of the throne of Egypt for her son, now recognized as her consort, Ptolemy XVI called Caesar: and, more than this, the wider dream of securing for Caesarion, this young son, the inheritance of the suzerainty of the known world, as the one son and the acknowledged heir of Julius Caesar, hereditary Imperator, Dictator for life, and acclaimed as a god on earth. She had had two rich years in Rome, the last two years of Caesar's life, as unacknowledged empress of the world: she looked forward to gray hairs crowned with all the crowns the troubled earth held.

Things went unevenly with Antony, back in Rome. The popularity was all his; the shrewdness was all Octavian's. In August, 44 B. C., some sort of reconciliation was patched up between them. By October, there was talk of an attempt by Octavian upon the life of Antony; and the quarrel broke out again. Antony now claimed that Caesar had adopted Octavian because of their immoral relationship —a thing quite in keeping with Caesar's conduct during an early period of his life; and said furthermore that Octavian was a low-born adventurer. Toward the end of the year Antony left Rome, and all expected to see civil war break out: it seems clear that Antony had determined to constitute himself protector for Caesarion and Cleopatra. Antony was attacked and almost defeated; by a series of surprising incidents, a reconciliation was again patched up, and the second Triumvirate, of these two leaders and rich Lepidus, was formed to put

down the assassins of Caesar, who were still at large.

In October, 42 B. C., Antony won the battle of Philippi, which ended with the death of Cassius and the suicide of Brutus. Octavian, ill, took little part in the battle, and all the glory went to Antony. Octavian returned to stripped Rome; Antony was given the richer East, and made his headquarters at Tarsus. From here he sent orders to Cleopatra to come to him. She knew his character well—that character which Renan summed up as that of

A colossal child, capable of conquering a world, incapable of resisting a pleasure.

He was a man of remarkable appearance: tall, heavily built, with the muscles of a gladiator and the thick curls of a demi-god, he seemed a reincarnation of Hercules, whom he claimed as his ancestor. He could subdue two brawling soldiers by knocking their heads together; and he was adored by all of his soldiers. He was an incorrigible practical joker, in staid Rome and reckless Alexandria alike. He drank, but he was not a sot; and he was the most dangerously eloquent man in Rome's dominions. He lost his heart to women with the utmost ease and the greatest frequency; and they usually followed suit. He had an ill name among the sober for trifling with the seventh Mosaic commandment; but this was an age when that commandment was honored in the breach.

Cleopatra knew all this: and, shrewd in her judgment of men, she set sail from Alexandria for Tarsus, determined to win Antony irre-

vocably to her support and the cause of her son, Caesarion. Antony, learning of her coming, established himself upon a tribunal in the market-place; but he did not understand Cleopatra. She had no intention of playing the part of a suppliant: let Antony come to *her!* Impatiently he waited her coming: then sent a message, inviting her to dine with him. Instead, she asked him to bring the Roman and local magnates to dine with her. Antony, not wishing to stand upon ceremony, and no doubt thrilled at the prospect of seeing again this mistress of the rulers of the world, with no obstacle between him and her, at once accepted the invitation. At dusk the dusky queen had her boat moored alongside the quay, where burly Antony stood ready to come aboard: and his eyes were gladdened with the most memorable spectacle that they had ever seen.

Across the sunset water the royal galley was being rowed by banks of silver-mounted oars; the great purple sails hung limp in the dusk calm. The steersmen stood within a shelter composed of an enormous gold elephant's head, with trunk raised aloft. Around them were grouped lovely slaves, as sea-nymphs and graces: beyond the musicians, under a gold awning, Cleopatra lay robed in the shimmering robes of the goddess of Venus, while boy Cupids fanned her with the dyed ostrich plumes of Egypt. As the sun sank, the barge was moored, and the Roman and his company stepped aboard. He could not scold the queen for her tardiness, at such a moment: and at once the guests were led down to the banquet-

ing saloon, and a dinner of the utmost magnificance. There were twelve triple couches, rich with embroideries; the dishes were gold inlaid with the rarest jewels. At Antony's exclamation of delighted surprise, Cleopatra negligently said that it was nothing, and made him a present of everything used at the banquet.

The second evening, Antony again invited the queen to sup with him; but again she was the hostess, at a feast far more extravagant than the first. When the guests departed, she gave each the couch on which he had lain, and the goblets before him, but to the chief guests she gave each a litter and slaves to carry it, together with Egyptian torch-boys; and for the lesser guests there were horses with golden trappings, to keep as mementoes of the banquet.

On the third day, Cleopatra dined with Antony, who had exhausted the resources of Tarsus to equal her splendor. He failed completely, and was the first to jest at this. The queen's banquets had been marked with the brilliancy of conversation and atmosphere of refinement that had so appealed to the intelligence of great Caesar: Antony's banquet, on the contrary, was notable for the coarseness of wit and a sort of rustic awkwardness. Cleopatra was greatest in her adaptability: and, as Plutarch says,

> Perceiving that his raillery was broad and gross, and that it savored more of the soldier than of the courtier, she rejoined in the same taste, and fell at once into that manner, without any sort of reluctance and reserve.

Of such are the great in life, and in love. The finicky man or woman, who shrinks from a broad story, can only mate happily with another as finicky as himself or herself; mated with a normal man or woman, the mate will be forced to seek consolation outside of the mated relationship.

With this adaptability, Cleopatra wholly won the Roman, and made him her devoted friend and ally. There was something irresistibly exciting in her presence; there was an added spice in the daintiness of her person, the vivacity of her bearing, the enchantment of her voice, thus enhanced by her unreserved jesting upon the broad subjects introduced into the conversation. Her banquets to him continued inordinately extravagant, and put all his efforts to shame: she was determined to convince him of her boundless resources, that he might desert the triumvirate, ally himself with Caesarion, and take from Octavian the power in Rome which the sallow nephew of great Julius had taken. A bit troubled at his unsuccessful efforts to equal her meals, he told her how much such an entertainment had cost her; whereupon she said that she could easily expend the equivalent of three quarters of a million dollars upon a single meal. Antony wagered confident that she could not: a judge was appointed, and the next day named for the test.

At the dinner, the display was, if anything, far below the ordinary; and with elation Antony expected to win the wager. Chortling something of this to the queen, she called for a little cup containing vinegar. She was wear-

ing on her ears, at the time, two priceless pearls, whose value together was far above the sum named. Nonchalantly she detached the first pearl, threw it into the vinegar, saw it promptly dissolved. She was about to follow with the second, when the judge declared that she had won. All of this display was part of her political campaign to overawe the great Roman with her wealth, and earn his support in her design against Octavian, to restore Caesarion to his place as Caesar's heir. What was the most priceless pearl in the world, compared to this goal?

One minor irritation troubled Cleopatra: the existence of her sister, the Princess Arsinoe, a determined young woman, who was evidently bent upon ousting the queen. Antony's consent was obtained, and the younger sister was murdered on the steps of the altar where she had fled for refuge. The Ptolemies had not lost their taste for shedding family blood. A pretender who claimed to be the slain Ptolemy XIV was also apprehended and killed. Soon afterwards, the queen sailed back to Alexandria, having won Antony's promise to visit her. If she had not yet accepted his love, she felt that she could have it when she chose.

No sooner had Antony prepared to proceed to Alexandria, in the autumn of 41 B. C., when word reached him of trouble in Rome,—an attack of his brother and his wife Fulvia against Octavian. At this time, Antony knew, there was small chance of defeating Octavian; besides, the stern nature of Fulvia was an unpleasant contrast to the gay magnificence of

Cleopatra's court. He satisfied his conscience by telling himself that he would stay only a few months in Egypt, and there raise funds and troops to use against Octavian. So he made his choice, for the clever Nile siren rather than the sober Roman matron.

The Alexandrian days were a revelation to him: for, for all his youthful rioting, he was essentially a Roman soldier, quite unused to the refinements of Oriental civilization. Laying by his Roman attire, he wore the Greek costume usual in the Nile city, spoke the language, mingled with the philosophers. He was not deceived as to Cleopatra's desires towards him: she wanted him for legal husband, to rivet her position in the Roman world; she wanted a champion for her son; she wanted, for herself, an ardent lover. He knew that she was attracted by his herculean strength and brave appearance; he knew that she was young, passionate, exceedingly lonely, and bored with such casual loves as she had taken up and tossed aside. Secure in all this knowledge, he paid court to the great Nile heiress. Rude and awkward as he may have been in Oriental eyes, his was the power of the world, or a large part of it; and, besides, he was the reverse of a novice in wooing. He turned his gilded eloquence into the quick ears of the queen; passionate vows of love, all that a wise woman longs to hear, knows is untrue, and longs to know as true, he said. With Antony, love came easily: and the queen had long determined to have him. It was not long before his ardencies won her consent: the love

union was consummated in the sweet Alexandrian night, and with all the impulsive strength of her nature the young queen received his caresses.

The union was no secret thing; it was at once sanctioned by the court and the priesthood, being in Egyptian eyes as legal a marriage as that with Caesar had been. There is no doubt but that Cleopatra won from him a promise that he would not desert her, but would carry her to Rome as his queen: she had trusted Caesar, and had she not queened it over the Tiber capitol? To Antony, Cleopatra represented all that he needed: Egypt, wealth, political and military assistance, as well as a queen's bright love; to her, he was the desirable man in the whole world, both from romantic and political motives. Again it must be noted that there was an element of political planning on both sides: these were lovers who kissed empires together, and caressed, in part at least, for dynasties to come, and the world's sceptre.

The Alexandrian days and nights were brimmed with love and pleasure. She displayed to the keen-eyed Roman all of the pleasures of her kingdom; and he, anxious to shine in her eyes and the eyes of the court, would use any expedient that could add to his prestige. They went fishing in the harbor; and Antony, unable to make any catches, employed a diver to attach new-caught fishes to his hook, which he then landed, to the applause of queen and court. But Cleopatra saw through the ruse: and the next day, with a

larger gallery of admirers, she had her own diver attach a preserved fish brought from the Black Sea. When Antony drew the salted fish to the surface, there was general laughter: whereupon Cleopatra turned to him with the graceful compliment, "Leave the fishing rod, General, to us poor sovereigns of Pharos and Canopus; *your* game is cities, provinces, and kingdoms."

Roman and Nile queen formed a club among the exquisites of Alexandria, which they called "The Inimitables," whose object was the most extravagant entertainment conceivable. The variety of dishes is beyond exaggeration: among the viands served were sea-hedgehogs, oysters, mussels, sphondyli, fieldfares with asparagus, fattened fowls, black and white sea-acorns, sea-nettles, roe-ribs, boar's ribs, purple shellfish of two varieties, sow's udder, ducks, boiled teal, hares, Pontic pastry. The world was combed for delicacies: peacocks from Samos, grouse from Phrygia, cranes from Melos, kids from the Ambracian marshes, Chalcedonian tunny-fish, ass-fish from Pessinus, nuts from Thasos, acorns from Spain, and other stranger foods without number. So the months passed: and Rome and Egypt continued to cement their alliance in that most passionate and tempestuous of all relationships, the love intimacy. Early in the next year, the lovers became aware that their love was to be fruitful—which would bind them more closely together.

Antony was satisfied with the relationship; but to avoid an open break with Octavian, he

refused to become Cleopatra's consort legally. The queen began to wonder if her trust in the General had been misplaced: she already knew him to be unreliable, inconsequent, and, in certain ways, merely an overgrown boy. Now that she was about to bear him a son, would he stand by her, as Caesar had done, or would he desert her?

Then came his fateful message to her, that conditions in Rome and Syria, in February, 40 B. C., required his immediate departure. In Rome, it was merely the old dispute between Fulvia and Antony's brother against Octavian, about to break out into open warfare; in Syria, a more serious menace, involving an attack by Parthians and their allies. In the face of this, she could not hold him further; and, early in March, the farewells were said, and the lovers separated—she to march down the narrowing path of motherhood, he to face the unknown dangers of the world.

CHAPTER V

THE LOVE RENEWED

In the autumn of the same year, some six months after the departure of Antony, Cleopatra gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. She named them Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene—Alexander the Sun and Cleopatra the Moon. For the next three years her way was a lonely one. Her hands were busy with the care of her Egypt and her babies; her eyes sadly watched the tumults on the far Roman horizon. It was a period of utter despondency for her: when Antony left, she had expected him to return soon, or at least send her trusted messengers; and no word came from the deserting Roman.

Antony's position, when he reached Greece, was an unenviable one. Octavian was victor in Italy, and Antony's relations had fled to other lands; the Parthians were flooding over the Roman East, and threatened to capture all of the Oriental provinces of the great Republic. The meeting between Antony and his fugitive wife Fulvia was a bitter one: she full of reproaches for his Egyptian desertion of her, he bitter over her disastrous precipitancy in Italy. She sickened of the quarrel, and died, just before the birth of the twins to the queen in Egypt. At this, Antony sank his differences with Octavian, laid the blame for the war on his wife's shoulders, and patched up another

peace, and another Roman division of the world. To seal this compact, Antony contracted marriage with Octavia, the sister of Octavian, a widow of a few months; and this marriage was celebrated in state in Rome in October, B. C. 40.

Cleopatra's feelings, when news of this betrayal of her love by Antony reached her, must have been suffused with dejection. The queen must have met the new wife, in the old days when Cleopatra lived in Rome with Caesar; and it was no balm to her to reflect that the sister of Octavian was younger and, as many say, more beautiful, than the ruler of the Nile lands. She resolved henceforth to put no more trust in Antony; nor did she give him financial or military aid in the succeeding two years. And, deepest hurt of all, a woman's natural jealousy rankled within her.

In the September following, Octavia presented Antony with a daughter, named Antonia, who became the grandmother of the Emperor Nero. The General moved to Athens, and subsided again into the pleasant Oriental manner of living. Roman province after province was converted into a monarchy subordinate to Rome; Herod's kingship of Judea dates from this period. In utter contrast to his easy-going autocracy was the silent, bitter rule of Octavian in the West. His delight was the torture-chamber and the cross; he became known unpopularly as "The Executioner." His public manners were restrained and controlled rigorously; in private, he indulged in the wildest debauches, gambled heavily, ringed him-

self with low and dissolute companions. His Italian rule was a Reign of Terror: the Romans came to hate the sight of his slight body, pitted face, and decayed teeth. He suffered constantly from colds and a snuffling nose; his liver was ever out of order. His clothes were made at home by his wife and sister, and fitted him badly; and even in temperate weather, so cold-blooded was he, that he went forth swathed like a walking mummy. A man with all these defects either succumbs, or tramples the healthy world under his heels. Octavian was too shrewd to succumb.

The Triumvirate was renewed for five years: and Antony reached the momentous decision of cutting himself off forever from Rome, until he should return to it as the conqueror of the Parthians, and the ruler of the world. He sent his wife Octavia back to Rome, and invited Cleopatra to meet him again in Syria. This was not a romantic decision: he had not scrupled to leave the arms of Cleopatra for the cold Octavia; and on the birth of the Egyptian twins he had callously remarked that he did not intend to confine his progeny to one woman, but, like his ancestor Hercules, he intended to beget in every country a new line of Kings. But Octavian's star was slowly bending toward the horizon, while Antony's was again in the ascendant; it seemed the auspicious time to renew the Egyptian alliance, in the hope of eliminating Octavian, and grasping the whole suzerainty of the world. It was not the seductive allurements of Cleopatra that determined this deci-

sion: it was an easy-going statesman's opinion of which side of the world held the buttered bread.

The choice, to Cleopatra, was a different one. She knew now that Antony was not to be trusted: yet he was again the most powerful man in the world, and she must ally herself with power. However, this time she must make a definite agreement with Antony: in a word, he must marry her. Toward the end of 37 B. C., she met the General in Syria; and he agreed to her demands. Again we have her supreme audacity conquering: she had been for three years a deserted, wronged woman; yet out of the wreckage she could demand, and secure, all that she had desired before, and more. The agreement included (1) a legal Egyptian marriage, which need not be announced to the Roman Senate, since Antony had definitely cut himself from Rome; (2) Antony's assumption, not of the Egyptian kingship, but of the title of *Autocrator*, or absolute ruler, of the East—the equivalent of Imperator; (3) Antony's recognition of Caesarion as heir to the world, letting his own children have subordinate kingdoms; (4) Cleopatra was to have the furthest powers Egypt had ever controlled. Accordingly, he gave the queen Sinai; Arabia; much of Syria and Palestine; Phoenicia, except for the free cities of Tyre and Sidon; part of Cilicia; Cyprus; and part of Crete, together with minor territories. In return for all this, Cleopatra promised Antony Egypt's financial and military resources.

A quiet marriage probably took place; and

soon thereafter coins were struck, showing both heads, his as Autocrator, and hers as Queen. There are those who hold that the marriage did not take place until later; but all the evidence, including Antony's letter to Octavian referring to Cleopatra as his wife, seems to settle the question in favor of the marriage at this time. King Herod, whose territory had been given partly to the queen, met her soon after Antony departed on his Parthian expedition, and plotted her murder, claiming that she sought to seduce his virtue; but his advisors persuaded him against this step. The queen returned to Alexandria, where she gave birth to another son to Antony. The child was named Ptolemy, in accordance with the family custom. Before she had fully recovered, word came from Antony of the complete failure of his Parthian campaign, with a desperate appeal for further assistance from Egypt. The weakened queen hastened with her fleet to render the aid needed; and, after a resting period, the two of them sat down to plot the final overthrow of Octavian.

This winter in Alexandria marked a more sedate period for Antony and the queen: we hear no more of the Inimitable Livers, and their extravagant caprices. In the midst of the plans against Octavian, a renewed opportunity was offered Antony to go against Parthia; and, against Cleopatra's advice, he determined to act on it. On his way to the East, he received word that Octavian had sent Octavia, his sister and Antony's wife, from

Rome, to rejoin her husband: if Antony rejected her now, this would be a real cause for war between Antony and Octavian. Antony, in spite of a sincere liking and pity for his wife, would not see her. He was determined upon the expedition against Parthia; and Cleopatra, by feigning illness, persuaded the Roman lover to give up his designs against the East, and return to Alexandria to prepare against Octavian.

Octavia, back in Rome, complained to her brother of Antony's conduct. But when Octavian ordered his sister to leave Antony's house, she refused, saying that she would not have it said that the rivalry of two women, herself and Cleopatra, had brought on a war of such magnitude. Antony now celebrated his triumph over the King of Armenia in Alexandria—the first time that a Roman general had celebrated a triumph outside of Rome itself. This definitely announced to Rome that Alexandria, in his eyes, had become the rival, or the successor, of Rome, as the capital of the world. After the Triumph, Antony proclaimed Cleopatra sovereign of Egypt and the territories he had given her; named Caesarion, son of Julius Caesar, co-regent with his mother, under the mighty title of King of Kings; gave to Alexander Helics, his own son, the kingdoms of Armenia, Media, and the yet unconquered Parthia; bestowed upon Cleopatra Selene, his daughter, Cyrenaica, Libya, and part of the North African coast; and proclaimed his baby son, Ptolemy, King of Phoenicia, northern Syria, and Cilicia. With cool

effrontery wrote a full account of these proceedings to the Senate at Rome, asking them to ratify his acts; at Octavian's insistence, this was read to the Senate.

The palace at Alexandria was ornamented with the most extravagant sumptuousness as a home for the royal lovers. At this time Antony definitely began to overdrink, and to act in a casual way unbefitting a monarch. Cleopatra's presence seemed necessary to his very existence. One of the redeeming features was his home life with the queen, now legally his wife, and his children by her. Out of this casual comfort Antony removed with Cleopatra to Ephesus, as the base of his campaign against Octavian. Here allied Eastern king after king came to his aid; the Roman world was again divided into two armed camps, with the cause of conflict not only the rivalry of two great leaders, but a mother's insistence that her son be given his heritage: Cleopatra's determined stand that Caesarion, son of the great Julius, be recognized as the heir of the world.

In the spring of 32 B. C., some four hundred Roman Senators arrived at Ephesus—those who had determined to share Antony's lot. Eight hundred remained behind with Octavian. Their arrival meant trouble in the camp: they did not like the altered Oriental Antony, nor would they abide the royal autocratic mien of Cleopatra. Yet she could not leave the camp, since she did not trust Antony: even now, she learned, he had offered to Octavian to lay down his arms, if The Executioner would do

likewise. One party in the camp urged Antony to reconcile himself with Octavia, and thus end the trouble; Cleopatra led the other faction, which demanded war at any cost. Out of the bothersome turmoil Antony took an aggressive step, sailing over to the island of Samos, one step nearer Rome. Here he spent some months in riotous entertaining, a dreadful contrast to the grim desolation over the rest of the cities of the world, which had been combed of their soldiers and their wealth, for this fraternal warfare.

Toward the end of May the vast assemblage crossed over the sea to Athens; and here Antony and Cleopatra held court. Antony's vacillation had caused an actual state of quarreling between himself and the queen; her distrust had grown stronger. She won at last, and in June Antony formally divorced Octavia, and summoned the rest of his force from Ephesus. This meant war. To the queen he promised to restore in Rome the monarchy that Caesar had planned; to the Senators, he promised in two months a restoration of the republic. This again increased Cleopatra's distrust of the windvane general. His conduct was anything but democratic; he had himself, at the end of a great drinking bout, proclaimed as the god Bacchus returned to earth. Jupiter-Caesar was dead, Venus-Cleopatra had turned to Bacchus-Antony for vengeance: and what deity was the slight, sickly Octavian to be, when he met this rollicking opponent?

Certain of Antony's followers saw that Bacchus was no god to follow in a war: and

desertions began to occur. Octavian, taking advantage of the unpopularity of Antony, issued a decree depriving the Roman of his offices and authority, on the ground that he was letting a woman exercise them in his place. He also issued a formal declaration of war, not against Antony, but against Cleopatra. He announced that the generals against whom Rome would fight would be the Egyptian court-eunuchs, the queen's hair-dressing girl and her maids; for these had become Antony's chief state councillors. Yet Antony did not worry: for Egypt could feed all of his forces, while Rome had nowhere to turn from starvation; Egypt had wealth to pay all of his soldiers, while Octavian would have difficulty in finding any money to pay his troops with. Antony did not believe he would have to fight a land battle; he left his legions scattered. and took up his station near the Gulf of Ambracia.

Realizing his difficulties, Octavian promised to allow Antony to disembark in Italy, and fight it out in a land battle. Antony in return challenged Octavian to a single combat, though Anthony was the elder man. Octavian refused this; and also refused Antony's invitation that Octavian bring his army over the plains to Pharsalia, where Julius Caesar and Pompey had fought seventeen years before. Whereupon the armies sat down to glare across at each other across the Ionian Sea.

When Spring came, Octavian by a feint led Antony southward, slipped across to the mainland, and marched down to the promontory

across from Actium. Antony hurried back, and prepared his ill-manned fleet for battle. Octavian would not venture it: whereupon occurred another deadlock. Octavian's fleet had Antony's bottled up in the Gulf of Ambracia; but Antony's army had Octavian's camp surrounded by land. Cleopatra argued that one naval battle would leave Octavian hopelessly exiled in his camp, while Antony could sail into Rome, denuded of its Senators and officials, and take control without a blow. Meanwhile, his Roman advisors insisted that the Queen be sent back to Egypt, in which case Antony's popularity would be restored, and his cause should triumph.

Antony's final plan seemed a compromise between the two. He decided to break the blockade, and, as soon as Octavian's fleet was defeated, to have Cleopatra sail back to Egypt, while he proceeded to Rome. In the midst of the planning a more dangerous desertion took place, which provoked a bitter quarrel between Antony and the Queen, that lasted as long as they were in Greece. Out of his blazing anger Antony's ships, larger than Octavian's, suddenly appeared at the mouth of the Gulf. Octavian, with some timidity, withdrew his ships out into the open sea, and awaited the onset of the others.

The result of the battle is only too well known. The smaller ships of Octavian slowly defeated the more massive craft. Antony, watching with horror, could only wonder if his army would still stand firm. Cleopatra, seeing this last terrible upset to her plans, determined

to abandon Antony, not in the hour of his triumph, but in the moment of his defeat. She gave the word, and set off down the suddenly favorable wind toward Egypt.

When Antony saw this flight of the queen, he lost his head completely. The queen had not stayed to say farewell: he must see her for one moment, at least. And what did it matter if he did not return to the battle? All was lost. . . . And so he transferred to his fastest galley, and overtook the fleeing Egyptian flagship. Cleopatra cannot have beheld him with love: here he was a defeated man, intent on dragging her further down in his ruin. He would cling to her until the end. Yet he was her husband, and she could not abandon him in defeat, as in victory she thought he had planned to abandon her. She gave the signal, and let him come aboard. He walked, as in a daze, to the prow of the ship, and here seated himself, his face in his hands, saying no word.

So they returned to Egypt.

CHAPTER VI

AFTER ACTIUM

There are love affairs which proceed in the rosy tranquility of peaceful hours; but Cleopatra's was not of that sort. There was the noise of empires falling around her at all stages of her story. When she landed in Alexandria, with Antony in hiding at an obscure port a few scores of miles away, she held no love in her heart for her former lover. He was a dreadful encumbrance. Octavian was sure to hunt him to the rim of the earth. It would be better for Antony if he killed himself at once. Then Cleopatra might still realize her dreams. Not at once, of course; but her rank as queen of Egypt might be left her, and, when Octavian died, the young Caesarion might still rise to the power that should be his. So she must have mused. And, indeed, Antony did attempt to commit suicide; but his friends prevented this, and the broken man at length presented himself again before the queen.

He had determined, he explained, to build himself a little house, and like Timon of Athens spend his last days cursing humanity. The queen built the house for him, at the end of a strongly fortified promontory, and named it Timonium. Caesarion was now approaching his seventeenth birthday; and at such an age it was not unusual for an Egyptian boy to be legally of age. Cleopatra determined to mark

the event with imposing festivities, as if to notify Octavian, now troubled with his troops in Italy, that henceforth he had a man to contend with. Antony came out of his retirement, to propose that his son by Fulvia be declared of age at the same time. The broken general took up his residence in the palace again; but the old terms of love with the queen could not be resumed.

Antony called together the old members of The Inimitables, and organized with them a new club, the "Die-togethers": "Let us eat, drink and be merry: for tomorrow we die." He did not really mean to die; but Cleopatra was shrewder as to the possibilities that might occur. She spent several months experimenting on condemned criminals with all sorts of poisonous drugs, retaining those which promised an easy exit from life. She determined at last that the bite of the asp, perhaps meaning the deadly little horned viper, was the ideal way to die: for this brought on merely a heavy drowsiness, the senses being stupefied by degrees, and the victim dying as easily as one goes to sleep. She determined, if the worst came, to take her life by this means: and turned her attention again to statecraft. Octavian had approached as far as Syria; and, while there was yet time, she sent her son Caesarion on a trip with merchants to India, in the hope that there he might form a mighty coalition of the East, and regain his birthright.

There was now no romance between Antony and the queen. Each regarded the other with mutual distrust; he could concoct no plans,

and give no aid, toward their salvation: and the plucky little queen was left to make the last fight alone. Both Antony and Cleopatra now sent messages to Octavian, she asking to be allowed to retain her throne, and he, that he be allowed to live out his remaining years as a private citizen. Octavian made no answer to Antony; to Cleopatra he sent a secret message that he would be friendly to her, if she would put Antony to death. He did not intend this mercy: his desire was to have Cleopatra in his triumph. Honesty was not a part of his cold calculating nature. He desired the death of Antony and that of Caesarion, and the final humiliation of the queen. It is said that Octavian even sent messages of an amorous nature to Cleopatra, as part of his deception; although this is not certain.

If he could be clever and deceptive, so could she. She discussed the matter at length with his messenger, agreeing that Antony in honor should commit suicide. Antony, excluded from these conferences, had the messenger seized and whipped, and sent back to Octavian with the suggestion that, in retaliation, Octavian whip certain of Antony's supporters who had deserted to Octavian. The grim humor of this delighted Cleopatra; she began to pay more attention to her husband. A small discouragement dejected him again; and he sent several cringing messengers to Octavian. Cleopatra constantly received messages from Octavian, promising her his friendship if she would put Antony to death. Her temptation must have been great: but she would not sacrifice her drunken husband to her own safety.

The queen had already had her mausoleum built; and, as soon as Octavian laid seige to the city, she caused her valuables to be removed here, and moved here herself, in order that she might die, if she must die, in proper dignity. Antony drew up his forces for a final conflict: whereupon his cavalry deserted in a body to Octavian. Without reason the broken man cried out that Cleopatra had betrayed him again. She fled in terror from his frenzied looks, and locked herself within her mausoleum, sending word to Antony that the queen was about to kill herself. This message was brought to him slightly altered: that the queen had killed herself.

There was no room left for suspicion in his mind. He had made his slave Eros promise to kill him, when called upon to do so: and he now demanded the final act of loyalty. Instead, Eros fell upon the sword himself, and died. Antony, inspired by this example, fell upon his own sword, and wounded himself fatally, although he did not die immediately. Word was brought to the queen: she sent for Antony to be brought to her. So his dying body was brought to the mausoleum. She may have feared the menacing crowd; or may have been unable to unlock the heavy bolts. In any case, she and her two maids let down a litter from the window, and with all the strength in their women's bodies hauled and tugged, until they had lifted the heavy Roman up to the window, and laid him within the room. Here he died, in the arms of his queen.

Shakespeare gives her poignant words at the moment:

> Noblest of men, woo't die?
> Hast thou no care of me? shall I abide
> In this dull world, which in thy absence is
> No better than a sty?

What was there left for her but death? So she determined; and, in anticipation of the emergency, she had had a funeral pyre prepared in the adjoining room. Octavian's messenger came. By a trick they called the queen to the bottom of the staircase, where they spoke with her through the door; and meanwhile, with ladders hurriedly brought from nearby, armed men swarmed up to the open window, and captured the frantic queen.

Octavian entered the desolate city peacefully, and promised general pardon. He gave the queen to understand that, if she put herself to death, he would at once kill her children, Cleopatra Selene and Ptolemy, whom he had captured. Antony's body was prepared for burial; and the tragic, piteous little queen followed him to the grave, followed by her weeping ladies. Gone was all thought of his weaknesses: she remembered only now that this man had trod the world once, and had loved her once. She fell desperately sick; and had hardly recovered, when Octavian entered her convalescence chamber. He comforted her as best he could, and ordered her to turn over her jewels to him. When she did not turn over all, and an obsequious servant told this to Octavian, she flew into a rage, beating his face with her fists: whereupon Octavian assured her that

she could keep the jewels she had hidden. She pretended that she was reconciled to accepting his friendship; but she had other plans.

Her final determination came when she learned that Octavian had determined to kill Caesarion, as a claimant to the throne of great Julius. Concealing her purpose, she begged to be allowed to visit the tomb of Antony; and this permission was granted her. Having sorrowed over the remains of her husband, she prepared herself as carefully as if for a bridal, and finally dismissed all of her attendants except her maids Charmian and Iras. She wrote a note to Octavian, asking to be allowed to be buried beside Antony. She addresses the poisonous asp, which a countryman had brought her in a basket of figs,

> Come, thou mortal wretch,
> With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
> Of life at once untie; poor venomous fool,
> Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak,
> That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass
> Unpolicied!

She applies the asp to her breast. Charmian cries out,

> O eastern star!

The queen answers slowly:

> Peace, peace!
> Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
> That sucks the nurse asleep?

And so she died.

When Octavian read her letter, he at once hurried to the tomb, guessing in advance what had occurred. When his men arrived, the queen

was dead; Iras was breathing her last; Charmian, scarcely able to stand, was trying to adjust the queen's crown. It was uncertain at first how she had died; and then a soldier discovered a snake-track leading from the mausoleum over the sands toward the sea. When Octavian arrived, he said:

> She shall be buried by her Antony;
> No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
> A pair so famous.

The picture of Cleopatra which the world has is the Roman picture, which regarded her as the enemy of Octavian, and hence as the seducer of Julius Caesar and Antony: but such was not her real nature. She was not a mere lustful Oriental sovereign: her lifelong devotion to the cause of her son Caesarion establishes her definite nobility of character. She was far more moral than most of the Greek and Roman women of her time: her faithfulness to Caesar and, later, Antony, while they were with her, was astonishing. She did not go with single heart to love: statecraft was always in her mind—at first her desire to regain the throne of the Ptolemies, to which she was entitled; and then her widening desire to make sure that her son Caesarion, by Julius Caesar, should succeed to the power of Egypt and great Rome. As a stateswoman, she was one of the great rulers of history: and though she failed, the strong Alexandrian influences which, after her death, controlled the development of the Roman empire, showed that her spirit had not failed.

Her bravery, audacity, and unwillingness to

grant defeat, no matter how great the temporary disaster, are memorable. Again and again she found herself without a kingdom, without an army, or with only the shattered remains of one: not in a single instance did she yield to despair. Rome did not picture her kindly: but the truer picture is given in the words of Enobarbus:

> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety: other women cloy
> The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
> Where most she satisfies; for vilest things
> Become themselves in her, that the holy priests
> Bless her when she is riggish.

Even this implies that she was at times riggish, or wanton; and that is in fact only the slightest breath on the picture. Pictures of her as a lustful gipsy, or the world's wanton, are as untrue of her in Shakespeare as they are on sycophantic Roman tongues; yet in the main the picture of the English singer is fair to her. Her rhapsodic description of Antony, after the great leader's death, is as false in praise, as the slurs quoted were in dispraise:

> I dream'd there was an Emperor Antony. . . .
> His face was as the heavens; and therein stuck
> A sun and moon, which kept their course, and lighted
> The little O, the earth. . . .
> His legs bestrid the ocean; his rear'd arm
> Crested the world: his voice was propertied
> As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
> But when he meant to quail and shake the orb
> He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
> There was no winter in't; an autumn 'twas
> That grew the more by reaping; his delights
> Were dolphin-like; they show'd his back above
> The elements they liv'd in; in his livery

Walked crowns and crownets; realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pocket.

There had been an hour when Antony played much of this part; but he was never the great man that Caesar was, or that, in his sour way, Octavian was.

Theophile Gautier, in the exquisite *One of Cleopatra's Nights*,* paints an imaginary picture of one of her later lovers, a lover for a night only. The lover in this case is a humbler Egyptian, Meiamoun, who enjoys the queen for one night, and in return pays for his pleasure by drinking poison as day dawns. As he dies, Mark Antony rides in, to reclaim his mistress. There may have been such incidents: but in the name of historical truth, it should be pointed out that, to balance this, Gautier should have written some hundred of *Caesar's Nights*, and more than a score of *Antony's Nights*. Not only was Cleopatra painted in the unfriendly colors of Roman bitterness, but she was painted primarily by men. Great queen as she was, she lived in a world whose standards were set largely by men, and whose judgments, as recorded in literature, were made by men. If she was a harlot, Caesar was a hundred times a harlot, and Antony more than a score times a harlot; if she was lustful, they were multipliedly so. She loved with discretion, restraint, and fidelity: none of her great lovers could say as much.

It is idle to speculate upon what would

*Little Blue Book No. 178.

have happened, if history had been otherwise; if, for instance, Antony had not wasted his substance in the wild Parthian expeditions; or had been more of a man and less of a sot toward the end; or if a land battle near Actium, or the sea fight itself, had established Octavian as the victim, and Cleopatra and Antony as the winners. History is almost silent concerning one of the most interesting figures who ever walked its stage: Caesarion, the son of Julius Caesar and the Nile queen, who was more than seventeen at his death. If Octavian had lost, soon enough the ambitious mother would have set the son of the great Dictator upon the throne: and we might have had a second Caesar, whose splendor would more than compensated for the weak line of Julian monarchs who dawdled across the purple city, and expired in the hysteric laugh of Nero, as he plunged the sword into his own rotted body. As it was, with Octavian the new-rich blood came in, and Rome started downward.

But these things are as they were: and all that we can do is remember Cleopatra the queen, as she ruled two years from her trans-Tiberine villa, and as she fought for a dozen more losing years in behalf of her land and her dreams; all that we can do is remember Cleopatra the mother, who was willing to pay any price to assure her children the purple that was theirs by blood; and to remember Cleopatra the patriot and noble-hearted woman, who told the messenger of Augustus, in her direst hour:

Shall they hoist me up
And show me to the shouting varletry
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me! rather on Nilus mud
Lay me stark naked, and let the water-flies
Blow me into abhorring! rather make
My country's high pyramid my gibbet,
And hang me up in chains!

She was spared the disgrace, and sleeps, let us hope, soundly by the side of the Roman husband who in the end was so unworthy of the love of this bright queen of the world.

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